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Sheep Ked

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SHEEP KED



Cooperative Extension Service
South Dakota State University
U.S. Department of Agriculture

SHEEP KED

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The sheep ked, also called the sheep tick or louse fly, is an external parasite which, if left uncontrolled, causes serious economic losses to the sheep producer.

This wingless fly crawls over the sheep's body and feeds by thrusting its sharp mouthparts into the flesh and sucking blood. This causes an irritation to the sheep that results in an unthrifty and unprofitable animal. Wool volume and quality also will be markedly affected.

Keds are especially hard on lambs, for they will migrate from the ewes to the lambs at shearing time.

Life cycle

The sheep ked spends its entire life on the animal.

Two life stages are commonly on the sheep at any season of the year. The adults, which are grayish-brown, wingless, and six-legged, have broad, leathery, somewhat flattened, unsegmented, sac-like abdomens covered with short, spiny hairs. The thorax and head are much narrower.

The legs are widespread; the first pair appear to come out of the sides of the head. The body is about 1/4 inch long and covered with short, spiny hairs.

The other visible stage of the sheep ked is the so-called "nit." It is a nearly round, chestnut-brown, seed-like object that is glued fast to the hair, especially around the neck, inside the thighs, and along the belly.

It is not an egg but a pupal case enclosing the fly. The sheep ked does not lay eggs.

The maggots are nourished inside the female until they are full grown. When born, they are whitish, oval, about 1/8 inch

long, and without appendages.

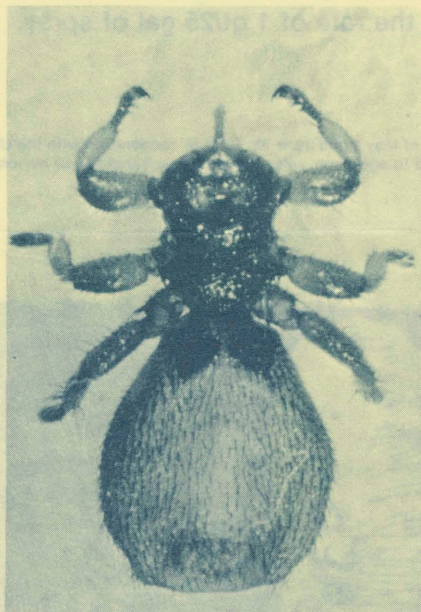
The female secretes a glue which sticks the larvae near the base of the sheep's hair, especially about the neck and belly.

Within 12 hours the case turns brown and forms a hard puparium about the larva.

Within this case, pupation takes place, and in summer the adult tick breaks out about 19 to 23 days later. In cold weather, 3 to 5 weeks or more will pass before the adult tick emerges.

After mating, the females begin depositing full-grown larvae. Each female produces 10 to 20 maggots, which are born at the rate of about one a week. Females live about 6 months.

A sheep ked normally never leaves its host and, if separated from the animal, seldom lives over one week. Breeding is continuous, though slower in winter. There are several generations a year.



Sheep ked, adult stage, a wingless fly which can make a sheep uncomfortable and unprofitable.

Need for ked control

Heavy ked infestations can cause death. However, in most cases, animals will be unthrifty and weakened, thus more susceptible to other health problems.

The most severe damage, from an economic standpoint, is a skin condition called "cockle." This is a raised blemish or rash in the skin caused by the bite of the ked. This results in pelts of less value to the tanning industry because they cannot be properly softened, sueded, or dyed.

In addition to cockle, ked infestations can result in lighter lambs, less wool production, and lower quality wool clips.

Prevention and control

The best time to treat for ked is right after shearing. Many of the parasites are eliminated, and the surviving ked are not protected by the fleece.

After the ked are eliminated from the flock, reinfestation can be prevented by treating and isolating new sheep introduced into the flock.

Ectrin insecticide has been used extensively in control of sheep ked. Researchers in Wyoming have found this synthetic pyrethroid most effective in elimination of ked from the treated herds and have suggested its exclusive use in the state ked-free program. It is effective as a spray, pour-on, or ULV spray. Follow label directions.

There are a number of other insecticides labeled for sheep ked control. See Table 1.

Reference to any products in this publication is not an endorsement to the exclusion of others which may be similar. Persons using such products assume responsibility for their use in accordance with current directions of the manufacturer.

Table 1. Insecticides for control of sheep ked.

Insecticide	Treatment	Remarks
*Ectrin 10% WDL	Spray: 1 qt/100 gal or 1 oz/3 gal Pour on: 1 qt/12½ gal or 4 oz/1½ gal ULV Spray: 1 qt/1 gal or 1 oz/4 oz	Wet animal with up to 1 qt of dilution. Apply up to 4 oz of dilution down midline of back. Mist ⅓ oz of dilution per animal
Anchor 10% EC	1 pt/100 gal of water	Spray to run-off or fog or mist using 1 qt spray mix per head
Ciovap 12.5% EC	2 gal/100 gal water	Spray animals thoroughly using up to 1 gal of finished spray per animal with a second spray 10-14 days later. Repeat as necessary but no more often than once every 7 days. Minimum days from last application to slaughter is 1 day.
Coumaphos (Co-Ral) 25% WP	4 lb/100 gal water	Do not treat within 15 days of slaughter. Do not apply to lactating goats or goats within 14 days of freshening.
Dioxathion (Delnav) 30% EC	2 qt/100 gal water	No time limitation on slaughter. Do not use more often than once every 2 weeks.
Lindane 20% EC	2 qt/100 gal water	Do not use within 30 days of slaughter. Do not treat dairy goats or animals under 3 months of age.
Malathion 25% WP	16 lb/100 gal water	No waiting period necessary. Do not use on lambs under 1 month old. Do not apply to milk goats.
Malathion 57% EC	1 gal/100 gal water	

*Wetting agent should be added at the rate of 1 qt/25 gal of spray.

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